

Great Principals, Great Schools

2017

Using a SEED Grant to Recruit and Train New Principals

"No longer are we looking for a campus manager, we're looking for instructional leaders. Through the partnership, Principal Fellows are getting the opportunity to get the in-depth training needed to truly be an instructional leader of the campus."

-Larry Polk, Assistant Superintendent, Terrell Independent School District

Training school leaders to be effective on day one

Great school leaders are essential to student success. This makes the importance of well-prepared principals, who are ready to effectively lead high need schools, one of the most important things for districts to get right. Yet too often, principal preparation does not prepare school leaders in key areas that are essential for success, particularly in high-need schools. The Leadership Instruction for Teachers or LIFT Program, a partnership among the National Institute for Excellence in Teaching (NIET), Texas Tech University (TTU) and school districts serving high-need students, is designed to significantly improve the selection, training, and placement of effective school leaders. Beginning in Texas and expanding to Louisiana in year two, well-prepared school leaders are placed in high-need schools that need them the most.

Recruit more qualified potential principals

Districts serving high-need student populations report significant challenges in recruiting high-quality applicants to serve as school principals in their highest-need schools. In addition, districts often find that new principals lack the training to be effective in supporting teachers to improve their instructional skills. This partnership provides candidates with hands-on training in multiple dimensions of the principalship, including training in leading instructional improvement in their building.

The LIFT program increased recruitment efforts by the university and the school district to attract candidates. A key recruitment incentive of the LIFT program is the ability to participate while continuing to work in your district. The partnership uses a rigorous selection process to identify the most qualified candidates for preparation for the principalship. The selection process includes comparing the performance of candidates on their application materials, measures of aptitude on the Haberman assessment, and an interview.

Results show that admitted candidates attained a higher score on multiple dimensions of aptitude than non-admitted candidates. Overall, out of 50 applicants in Years 2 and 3, 27 (54%) gained admission.



BECOME A PRINCIPAL FELLOW WHILE WORKING IN YOUR DISTRICT

This selective, innovative Principal Fellows Program provides teacher leaders job-embedded, intensive school leadership training, instructional coaching and development in the key competencies of the principalship. We seek motivated candidates who are ready to immerse themselves in a new campus and interested in the roles of assistant principal and future principal.

Place Principal Fellows in high-need schools

LIFT Principal Fellows are placed in a high-need school under the mentorship of the building principal. In 2016, the NIET-TTU-district partnership graduated three Principal Fellows (Cohort 1). The graduates are serving as assistant principals in Lubbock ISD, and two out of three are serving in a high-need school.

Principal Fellows increase their instructional coaching skills

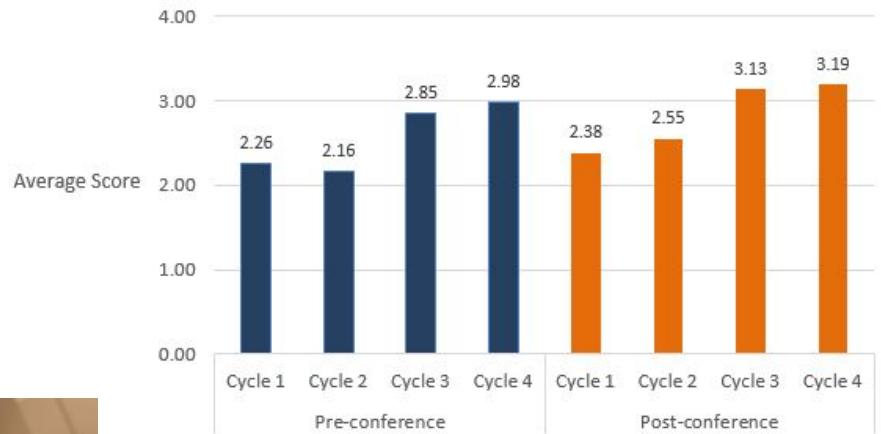
"The Principal Fellows Program has grown my leadership skills in that I am now able to coach teachers to understand where they are at, where their students are at, and what they need to do to grow. The program has really taught me how to lead other adults."

-Amanda Rodriguez, Principal Fellow, Stephen F. Austin Elementary School

Principal Fellows selected two teachers in the school with whom to focus on improving their instructional skills. They provided the teachers with feedback and coaching through four cycles of observation – Pre-Conference, Observation, and Post-Conference – across the school year.

During each cycle, Principal Fellows were videotaped and rated on a 1 (“Approaching”) to 5 (“Exemplary”) scale on their ability to guide and provide feedback to teachers before (“pre-conference”) and after (“post-conference”) using the TAP Teaching Standards Rubric. The figure on the right shows Principal Fellows’ steady and consistent improvement in their coaching skills in conducting pre- and post-conferences with teachers.

Principal Fellows’ Coaching Skills Improved Over Time.



BECOME A PRINCIPAL FELLOW AT TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY

This selective, innovative program provides job-embedded, intensive school leadership training, instructional coaching and development in the key competencies of the principalship. We seek motivated candidates interested in the roles of assistant principal and future principal.

- 15-month Principal Fellow program at Texas Tech University
- Graduate with a M.Ed. in Educational Leadership with certification
- Year-long immersion experience in the field
- Collaborative virtual learning with high-performing peers
- Individual coaching and learning with experienced principals
- Rigorous program focusing on leadership skills and principal competencies

Principal Fellows' tuition and university fees will be funded for the 2016-2017 cohort of the LIFT (Leadership Instruction for Teachers) program through a federal Supporting Effective Educator Development grant awarded to the National Institute for Excellence in Teaching.

Contact Dr. Fernando Valle at f.valle@ttu.edu or visit us at www.depts.ttu.edu/education

TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY

NIET NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR EXCELLENCE IN TEACHING

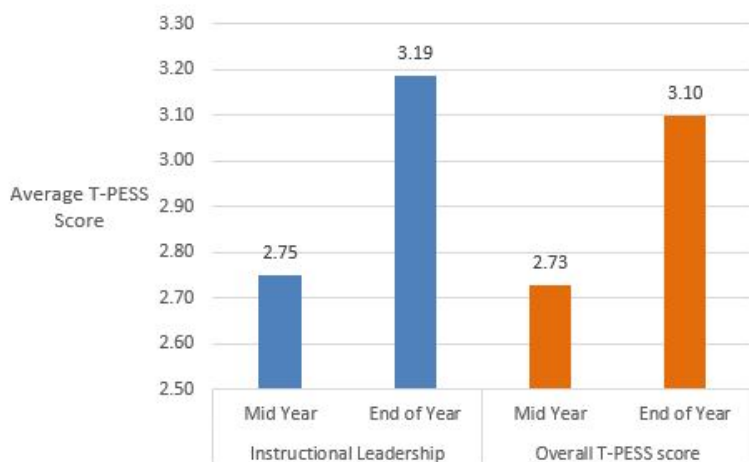


Principal Fellows improved their overall skills as measured by the Texas Principal Evaluation

Principal Fellows were evaluated using the Texas Principal Evaluation and Support System (T-PESS) rubric twice during the yearlong fellowship program – once in the fall (midyear performance) and once in the spring (end-of-year performance). The Texas Principal Standards in T-PESS serve as a guide for improving school productivity, increasing student achievement, and continually reflecting upon and improving principal effectiveness as a leader.

On the T-PESS scale of 1 (ineffective) to 5 (highly effective) Principal Fellows substantially improved their Instructional Leadership score (i.e., standard 1 of the T-PESS) as well as their overall T-PESS score (i.e., average of all 5 standards) from midyear to end of the school year.

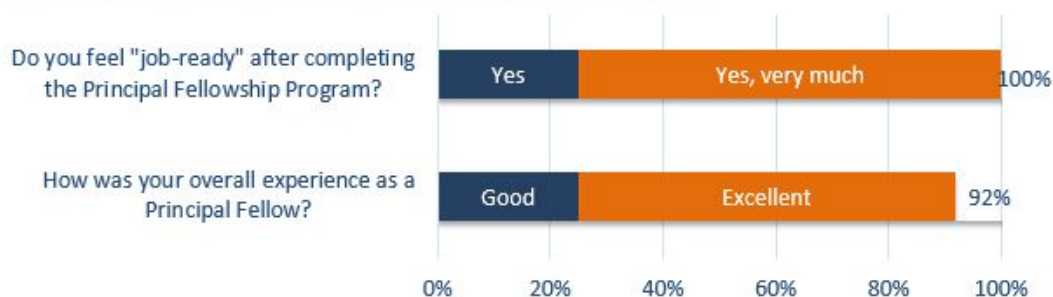
Principal Fellows Improved their Instructional Leadership and Overall T-PESS Scores from Mid-Year to End-of-Year.



Principal Fellows report feeling “job-ready”

When Principal Fellows were asked whether they feel “job-ready” after completing the program, 100% chose “Yes” or “Yes, very much.” Similarly, when asked to rate their overall experience as Principal Fellow on a scale of 1 (“Poor”) to 5 (“Excellent”), 92% reported their experience as Good or Excellent.

Principal Fellows Reported Positive Experience with the LIFT Program



Principal Fellows also completed a Principals’ Sense of Efficacy questionnaire that consists of 18 items measuring: 1) efficacy for management, 2) efficacy for instructional leadership, and 3) efficacy for moral leadership (Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2004). For each item, fellows were asked to indicate their opinion by marking one of the nine responses (1 = “None at all” and 9 = “A great deal”).

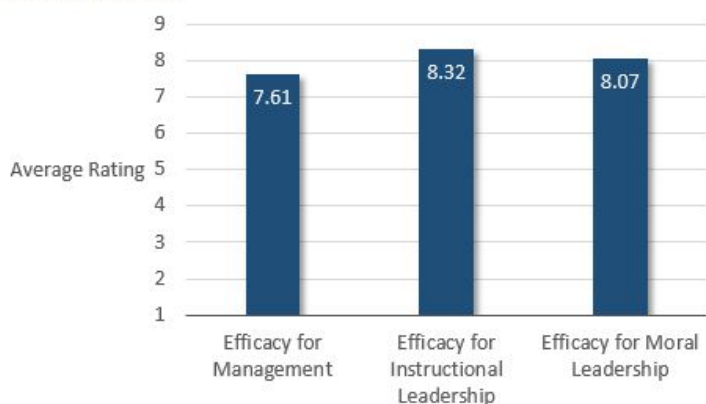
Efficacy for Management includes: 1) Handle the time demands of the job, 2) Maintain control of one's own daily schedule, 3) Shape the operational policies and procedures that are necessary to manage school, 4) Handle the paperwork required of the job, 5) Cope with the stress of the job, and 6) Prioritize among competing demands of the job.

Efficacy for Instructional Leadership includes: 1) Facilitate student learning in school, 2) Generate enthusiasm for a shared vision for the school, 3) Manage change in school, 4) Create a positive learning environment in school, 5) Raise student achievement on standardized tests, and 6) Motivate teachers.

Efficacy for Moral Leadership includes: 1) Promote school spirit among a large majority of the student population, 2) Promote a positive image of school with the media, 3) Promote the prevailing values of the community in school, 4) Handle effectively the discipline of students, 5) Promote acceptable behavior among students, and 6) Promote ethical behavior among school personnel.

Participants reported a high sense of efficacy in three key areas of principal leadership, and reported feeling particularly well-prepared for their role as instructional leaders.

Principal Fellows' Reported Sense of Efficacy for Management, Instructional Leadership, and Moral Leadership, 2016-17.



"The difference with the fellow program and master's coursework is that you get authentic, hands-on experience. In the fellows program, you do the theory, but then you have to put it in practice—and it's not some vague assignment. It is an assignment that is specific to your school. That's the beauty of the fellow program."

"It has been an eye-opening experience to have a principal fellow with me. It has made me go back and reevaluate how I got started as a principal and reevaluate what I do on a daily basis so that I can communicate what they need to know or learn to do on a daily basis."

-Lorimer Arendse, Mentor Principal, Grand Prairie High School

What difference is the LIFT Partnership making?

Principal Fellows reported that the job-embedded aspect of the program and the hands-on experience were the most helpful in preparing them to be effective school leaders. Their Mentor Principals agreed that the authentic hands-on work brought coursework to life, and enabled fellows to learn on the job in ways that measurably improved their leadership skills.

